



Miao Messenger

Location: Approximately 100,000 speakers of the Eastern Ghaio-Xong language are found in China. Western Ghaio-Xong is spoken by far greater numbers, claiming close to one million speakers. The Eastern Ghaio-Xong inhabit the far northeastern extent of Miao territory in China, near the Xiang (Hunanese) Chinese. They are located in parts of Luxi, Jishou, Guzhang, and Longshan counties in northwest Hunan Province. Most of their villages are on the top of mountains where they are able to maintain their customs in privacy. A Miao proverb states, “Fish swim in water, birds fly in the air, Miao live on the mountains.”¹

Identity: *Ghaio-Xong* is the autonym of this group, who have officially been included

under the Miao nationality in China. The Ghaio-Xong were labeled *Red Miao* by the early missionaries.² They have also been called *Huayuan Miao* and *Northern Miao*.

Language: Eastern and Western Ghaio-Xong have been combined by linguists to form their own language branch within the Hmongic (Miao) language family.

History: During the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279) the Ghaio-Xong staged 112 wars to save their tribal lands and preserve their way of life.³ Ralph Covell notes, “The Miao [Ghaio-Xong] people in Hunan seem to have been badly oppressed by the Chinese over a long period of time, but remained more independent in spirit than those in Guizhou and

Yunnan. This contributed to their reluctance to adopt a new faith.”⁴

Customs: For centuries the Ghaio-Xong have been “growing mulberries and raising silkworms, spinning and weaving, making paper-cuts and, of course, embroidering.”⁵ Many Ghaio-Xong festivals feature music played on the *suona* horn and on drums.

Religion: The Ghaio-Xong have the custom of worshipping Pan Hu, the dragon-dog they claim as their ancestor. Today the Ghaio-Xong of Maxiang County in Hunan have a carved stone tablet inscribed “for sacrificing to Great King Pan Hu” and topped by two dragon heads.⁶ Certain kinds of trees are also worshiped as deities. In many villages the front door of a family’s home is considered a god. The doors in these villages are worshiped annually in a ceremony where a pig is sacrificed and the blood is sprinkled on the doorposts.⁷

Christianity: In the 1920s Father Theopane Maguire of the Catholic Passionist Fathers — based in Brighton, Massachusetts, USA — commenced work among the Ghaio-Xong in three counties of Hunan Province. Their work, which was based in Yangshui County, suffered a setback when rebels killed three of the missionaries in 1929. By 1934 they had won 2,500 converts, but no record was made of how many were Ghaio-Xong compared to Han Chinese.⁸ In 1946 Maguire was forced to concede, “Here are no startling mass conversions, no pilgrimages of the mighty

to the feet of the crucified Christ, no peals of thunder to announce the herald of the Great King.”⁹

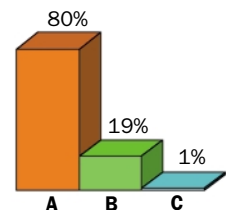


Population in China:
 80,000 (1990)
 103,200 (2000)
 133,100 (2010)
Location: Hunan
Religion: Animism
Christians: 1,000

Overview of the Eastern Ghaio-Xong

Countries: China
Pronunciation: “Gaow-Shong”
Other Names: Hmong: Eastern Xiangxi, Red Miao, Meo Do, Hsianghsi Meo, Eastern Xiangxi Miao
Population Source:
 80,000 (1995 Wang Fushi – 1990 figure);
 70,000 (1985 Wang Fushi – 1982 figure);
 Out of a total Miao population of 7,398,035 (1990 census)
Location: NW Hunan: Luxi, Jishou, Guzhang, and Longshan counties
Status: Officially included under Miao
Language: Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Northern Hmongic
Dialects: 0
Religion: Animism, Polytheism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity
Christians: 1,000
Scripture: None
Jesus film: None
Gospel Recordings: None
Christian Broadcasting: None
ROPAL code: MUQ00

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity